



CELEBRATING
OUR CENTENARY



ENGINEERS
AUSTRALIA

Hall of Fame Inductees

Engineering Heritage Queensland

Prof Emeritus Ray WHITMORE AM

DSc Hon FIEAust

1920 - 2008

INDUCTED IN 2016

Professor Ray Whitmore formed the first engineering heritage panels within Engineers Australia, initially in Queensland and then nationally in 1976.

His guiding hand helped to lay sound foundations for the identification, recording, assessment and conservation programs developed and used by Engineers Australia. He authored 39 heritage-related papers and six books and edited four more including the Eminent Queensland Engineers publications. His research and assessment skills were widely sought by a range of organisations.

He made notable contributions in a wide range of disciplines: in radar development; medical research into the properties of blood and the circulation system; mining and metallurgical engineering and he was a noted Queensland historian.

Ray was born in 1920 in Luton, Bedfordshire, England. He completed a Physics degree with the University of London in 1942 and was awarded the Sumpter Prize for Special Physics at the Central Technical College. He studied the development of radar - then a new and highly secret technology at the Physics Department at the University of Birmingham and then joined the RAF to work in this field.

His primary involvement was in turning promising new technical ideas into practical equipment and guiding this through the production stages. High points included involvement in deploying the counter measures that helped to confuse German defences and significantly assisted in the successful Allied D-Day landings in Normandy. After the war he resumed his academic studies and in November 1949 was awarded his Ph.D.

In 1953 he was appointed as Senior Lecturer in the Department of Mining and Fuels at Nottingham University to research coal preparation and mineral dressing for the National Coal Board focusing on the cleaning of coal, especially the viscosity and sedimentation of material suspended in fluids. He was awarded a D.Sc. by the University of Birmingham in 1959 and promoted to Reader.

Ray moved to Australia when he was appointed to the Chair of Mining and Metallurgical Engineering at the University of Queensland and was a professor from 1967 to 1985. Mining was booming in the state, particularly the rapid expansion of coal mining in Central Queensland, and there was concern about the future supply of mining and metallurgical engineering graduates. Ray rebuilt the Mining Engineering department and relocated it from George Street to a new building on the St Lucia campus.

He developed close links with the mining industry increasing support for scholarships for students and leading to the establishment of the Julius Kruttschnitt Mineral Research Centre at the University Experimental Mine site at Indooroopilly. During the late 1960s a Senior Lecturer was appointed to establish teaching in Petroleum Engineering and a Chair in Metallurgy and Materials was established in 1971. He established a Mineral Industry Advisory Committee jointly with the Department of Geology and Mineralogy to be chaired by an industry representative and became very actively involved with the mining industry and relevant associations.

His contributions to professional and community organisations included important roles with Engineers Australia, Engineering Heritage Australia, Australasian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy, Australian Coal Preparation Society, Brisbane and Ipswich City Council Heritage Committees, Queensland Heritage Council, the Queensland Museum, and the Royal Historical Society of Queensland. Ray was a Life Member of the Australian Coal Preparation Society and a long serving member of the Queensland Society.

Ray held a series of positions with Engineers Australia, ultimately serving as Chairman of the Queensland Division in 1982, and as a member of the National Council. He was a key member of Engineering Heritage Australia's Plaquing Committee (judging panel) for 18 years and was Chair of the Queensland Engineering Heritage Panel for 10 years from 1981 to 1991. In 1998 he became an Honorary Fellow of the Institution of Engineers, Australia in recognition of conspicuous service to the profession, and for unequalled knowledge of engineering heritage in Australia.

He was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia in 1994 in recognition of his 'service to mining and metallurgical engineering and to engineering history, heritage and industrial archaeology'. He was awarded the John Monash Medal in 2005 by Engineering Heritage Australia (EHA).

The Whitmore Room was named in his honour for his significant contributions to engineering heritage in Australia, and for his leadership in the National and Queensland Panels for Engineering Heritage upon their formation within Engineers Australia. Ray is survived by his wife, Ruth and two sons, John and Mark as well as six grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.